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Part I

History of the Initial Occupation of the Land

By

[illegible]

[illegible]

University of Cape Town

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/Title Page/

CONTENTS

Page

Note
Acknowledgements

Chapter I - General description 1
Chapter II - Traditional history 4
Summary 42
Chapter III - The main migrations 47
Summary 61
Chapter IV - Some Aborigines of the East 64
Summary 70
Chapter V - Expansion of the land to the Aborigines
west from Kumbla 71
Summary 80
Chapter VI - Expansion of the land to the Kumbla
Aborigines (Aborigines already recorded) 84
Summary 98
Chapter VII - Comments on the recorded opinions 100
Summary 108
Chapter VIII - Expansions to the Kumbla Aborigines
Conclusions 109
Summary 119

Appendices figures 120
Glossary 124
Index of publishers 127
Index 128
Sketch Maps to follow

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NOTE

[illegible] The Kenya Land Unit is referred to as the Unit. The Commission appointed in September, 1955, "to investigate the system of Native Land Tenure within the Native Reserves of the Kikuyu Province" is referred to as the 1955 Committee. The Commission appointed in April, 1945, to consider and report upon certain land problems in the Colony of Kenya, commonly known as the Kenya Land Commission and the Akiwa Carter Commission, is referred to as the Land Commission.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

[illegible] I am extraordinarily indebted to Dr. L.S.B. Leakey for allowing me access to certain chapters of his hitherto unpublished study of the Kikuyu, to Mr. W.M. Laughton for permitting me to read the manuscript of his monograph An Introductory Study of the Kikuyu Mind and to the Rev. F. W. Hunt for a copy of his Faith in Kikuyu Tribal Law.

[illegible]

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(2)

4b. The Dorobo

The last name on the list of pastoralists in the occupation of the west are held by the tribes of the list is Dorobo. Here again there have been much confusion and lack of definition, and to give of the continued existence of 'packets' of so-called Dorobo in many part of East Africa we feel ourselves keen with difficulties if we try to give a synoptic ethnological interpretation to the very common term. Some would lump all the Dorobo together with the other hunting tribes and call them aboriginal hunting people of a Bushman type, explaining obvious departure from that type by admixture in varying amounts of Bantu and Nilo blood. Others (including many Africans) hold that the difference between them and the other tribes is simply one of culture[1], not of origin, that the Dorobo class is only a step behind while the others, due in part to population pressure, moved from the hunting-trapping-gathering stage to that of herding or herding-planting.

Dr. Joseph Thomson, in Through Masailand, written in 1885 in connection, gives the following account:

> "The tribe - for the two subtribes of the Ko-ekithi - is a small race of people scattered over those land who gain their entire livelihood by the chase. They neither keep cattle nor cultivate the land. The antelope, the buffalo, and the elephant supply them with such meat as they may desire, while they always find neighbouring tribes ready to exchange vegetable food for game. The elephant, however, seems to be their staple food, and as a rule the Ko-ekithi are to be found only where these animals abound, as for instance

1. To the Akamba of the present time Akamba signifies a Akamba who, while engaging in hunting and trapping, lives in a settled village among the agricultural Akamba, while Dorobo signifies a Akamba (or anybody else) who lives in the forest and lives as part in agriculture.

"In each of
in the dense forests of Kenia and Kilimanjaro, the Kikuyu, the Kamasia
mountains of Elgon, the hill of Elgeyo, Kikuyuland, Ukambaland
ni, Teita, Shambala etc. They are rarely found in numbers and
usually in very small villages, so that even in settling the tribal
ties among them. They enjoy considerable immunity
from attack by the Masai, as they are useful to the
tribe by attending to most duties; usually, too, the Masai
kill two or a considerable part of the body. They also act as
go-betweens or middlemen in getting the required people the
vegetable food they require. It will be seen in the queer
contrast, that on the plateau to the east of Naivasha at the place
called by the native Gumuru-ni, a very large village of
Dorobo have altogether given up hunting, and almost entire-
ly by buying vegetable food from the Wa-kikuyu and selling it
again to the Masai as it may be the cattle.

"The language spoken by the Dorobo is allied to that of
the Masai, but they can all speak the latter in its purity. They
build regular villages, and in general appearance they resemble
the inferior class of Masai. As I have already remarked, they
make no definite trade dealings of the sexes as well as the
more serious nothing-pass of the women. They are on the
whole looked upon as a species of serf, and treated accordingly.
Their connection with the native must be done secretly, or
everything would be taken from them."

Mr. C. W. Hobley, in the glossary to his Eastern Bantu and
Kikuyu, says:

"Dorobo in Masai means arrow fly. The name is an aboriginal
race of hunters who inhabit the great forests of the highlands in
East Africa. They call themselves Ak and the Kikuyu call them
Aik. The name of the Aik River is believed to be a corruption
of Aik."

Boundaries - C.O. (no. 1895-1900) 1905 Sub Dandu Fol

/At end/

The "Dondo Commission" of 1905, appointed to investigate and (1)
make recommendations regarding accommodation for the various sections of the Dondo, defined the word in a general way including most kinds of hunting people, who were mostly in constant touch with no tribal organisation, were generally known by the name of some river or hill where they were found, and were pre-tribal and pre-pastoral.

Sir. The Kenya Land Commission was presented with at least two lengthy memoranda on the subject. One was that of Mr. C. W. H. Huntingford, the Local Correspondent for Kenya of the Royal Anthropological Institute. Mr. Huntingford, inter alia, said:

> "The hunting tribes who live in various forest regions of Kenya Colony are termed collectively Dondo, or, in their own language, Okiek .... The Dondo are the nearest approach to aboriginal inhabitants to be found in Kenya .... The Dondo are not an alien tribe. They are by far the most primitive in Kenya, and incredibly shy."

In another memorandum Mr. Huntingford gave his views as to Dondo relationships:

> /(a)/ "The Dondo are members of the race of hunters to which belong also the Wasia or Wa of Elgeyoland, the Suiya Nagwia of Turkland, the Boni of Jubaland, the Wakigui of Ismail, the Aramogoin[1] of the Tana Rivers, the Dume of Lake Rudolf,

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1. This is apparently a Boni word meaning 'those born forest'. They are possibly a sub-section of the Wakigui section. But cf. Ashley in Kenya: From Chartered Company to Crown Colony: "... while camped at the Tana confluence, we got into touch with a curious tribe, generally known as the Wa-Langulo, this being a nickname given to them by the Boni hunters tribe which means 'those who eat pig'. The Wa-Langulo are really akin to the Galla; further north they are called the Wa-Sania, and their language is a dialect of Galla. They are a hunting people and roam about in the arid tract/land which lies behind the coastal belt from the Tana River to what was then the Anglo-German border. If they shoot an elephant one tusk is given to the Galla chief."

/B cont'd/

and the Pygmies of Ituriensis. The Duru may be the same as the Lesse of the Egyptian inscriptions of the XII Dynasty, though certain Sudan authorities think the Lesse 'D' may not be part of the word. But the Lesse call the Swahili Wanga, plural Wangaa[1], which may date a name like L, with a plural suffix in 'D'; if so can accept this, we may see in Lesse a reduplication of the name Wa with a suffix 'D', and if we may identify the Duru with the Lesse, we have historical evidence of the antiquity of the hunting tribes, and confirmation of the Twa and Wazai view that the Swahili are the assimilated aristocrats of Eastern Africa."

/A/

The following is extracted from a communication addressed by Dr. Cyprian O.P. Greenham, C.B.E., F.R.A.I.C.

"There seems little doubt that the greater part of Eastern and Central Africa, from the coasts to the Congo forests, was originally inhabited in early times by short-statured peoples akin to the Pygmies of the Congo forests and the Bushmen of South Africa. By a series, five of these invasions, and seen by travellers of their duration, these little people have been split up, are dominated or absorbed in and by these late arrivals, and so are lost in various parts of the country remnants of them only, some having adopted the speech and customs of the invaders either in part or wholly, and all of them living lives of hunters in the hills and forests, few owning property except dogs. The most of these not with today are of mixed origin. Perhaps the best known are the Swahili (El Twaga or Swahili). The Swahili, like the Ogumba and neighbour peoples, are hunters ...

/B/

1. This would connect the Wanga with the Twa. But the peoples of the northern coast identify the Wanga with the Swahili and consider the Twa a separate people.

[illegible]

(2 cont'd)

Physically, the Dorobo are poorly, presumably according to the amount of mixture of other races in their blood. Some are very like the Bushmen, and therefore retain many native characteristics, while others are almost indistinguishable from the semi-Hamitic negroes, having lost many original characteristics and having adopted many of the Hamitic methods and customs. They, however, retain many primitive feelings, and, except in 6 villages (Kapsoo), so far as I know, the Dorobo keep no domestic animals except the dog. Being by nature hunters, and semi-nomadic, it is not expected that many members will ever become greatly, for they will in time become mostly absorbed in surrounding tribes .... In the country now occupied by the Kikuyu there were once many Dorobi people also in the Dorobo (or their predecessors) and the Ogiek. The Kikuyu are a Bantu tribe .... They attribute their origin to the Dorobo. They are invaders of the highlands, where they still do, intermarried or absorbed the original Dorobi (the Ukambani, Meru or Ogiek) and Dorobo .... The present density of population of the [illegible] Kikuyu is comparatively recent. They are comparatively recent migrants into the highlands. The low-fertile plains previously occupied by them were not rich enough, and a growing need for land gradually forced them up to the lower belts of Mount Kenya, destroying or absorbing the aborigines as they advanced .... In the A-Dorobo section, one may observe Kikuyu with Bushman-like features as a result of their absorption of the primitive Ogiek and Dorobo, while in other sections, the Kikuyu show a more Hamitic type of appearance as a result of Masai domination .... The Dorobo have been here for many thousands of years, being probably the original or almost the original inhabitants...."

61. But we should certainly not be justified, without further evidence, in assuming that all these hunting people were closely related or had a common aboriginal ancestor in Africa merely because they can be conveniently classed together as hunting tribes.

[illegible]
[illegible] the dreams a fact, to a very general extent, they have a common [illegible]
culture. All the tribes in the Lesei Unit, except the Sikiko and Wawes, with the 1956 Commission that they were in fact those of culture are set as they are.

40. Somewhat different groupings of tribes and sub-tribes into peoples descended from the original Swede tribe were given in evidence before the Land Commission by another authority, Mr. Clarence Leach, based on information he had acquired by means of his position as "a chief tribe to many tribes that are". He said:

> "As a result of my researches, I find that the Swedes are generally correctly the original settlers of this Colony, and have [illegible] many generations and thousands of years. The Swedes are a people, are always a part of a people;" the Swedes are the people where we have as Swedes all through Wawes and Colonys, but when we come up here" (i.e. to the vicinity of Ovalau) "the Swedes is not a Swedes any longer in the same way. Chief Away Kaisi and his tribes and those tribes on Rigas are also the original Swedes ... Of the Wawes, counties be were originally Swedes, viz.,- the Kaisi and the Wanitawia ... There are three groups ... the Wainawa, the Wamaiwia and the Tavawas or Waibeen. These three peoples were original inhabitants, and, vanquished by the incoming Wawes, were incorporated and grouped under the division of the Wawes called the Waibiyan, together with the [illegible] and the Wanggarua, who wandered in from the north, and fought here on the borders [illegible] for a very long period, eventually making a branch in what are called the Swedes, who are the original tribes, of which the Bagitaki and the Kaisi appear to be sub-tribes. They all belong together ... The three fire-named peoples came from the Coast and claim to be of the same descent as the Kaisi. They came up here and mixed with the Swedes ... Away Kaisi is of royal blood; I know him well, and can trace his pedigree back for hundreds and hundreds of years ... (Away Kaisi's tribe) have owned Rigas for thousands of years ... He belongs to the group [illegible]

/22 cont'd/

ruled the Lake Victoria Basin, who owned all the land. They are the ancient Bantuse[1], the bulk of whom passed down into the south. /23/ There are scattered remains of Bantu round Kilimanjaro, the rest of the group are to be seen in South Africa. These people held title to land here for thousands and thousands of years .... the Dorobo were the aborigines of the country .... the Dorobo were the original owners of cattle, and the Masai and others took their cattle from the Dorobo; they took others too."

/24

66. Carbide Lord differs from the "Dorobo Committee" in that he makes the Dorobo pre-tribal and pre-pastoral rather than pre-tribal and pre-pastoral, the tribe having suffered disintegration at the hands of persons invaders who took their cattle from them.

67. We thus have two views of the Dorobo tribe which are extremely difficult to reconcile. One view is that the Dorobo were originally primitive people of a Bushman type, in a hunting, trapping stage of culture, which culture they retained in spite of many years (in certain sections) of Negro and Nilo-Hamitic blood. They neither kept cattle nor cultivated. The other is that the Dorobo were the aristocrats, the only pure-blood in Eastern Africa, in whose representation of their own blue blood, unmixed

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[1] /23/. The Bantuse have been held responsible for various holes in the ground in the Nyanza Province and elsewhere, which are in fact known as "Bantuse holes", and were apparently used as dwellings. But Mr. J.G. Hamilton Rae, in a memorandum submitted to the Land Commission, writes: "At some remote period, probably not less than 200 years ago, a tribe, about which very little indeed is known, called the Bantuse, entered Elgeyo from the north and north-west. They built huts on stone plinths some of which remain to this day in various parts of Elgeyo proper. It has been suggested that they were responsible for the admirably engineered series of irrigation furrows in North Marakwet and Endo". If the Bantuse were capable of such engineering it would seem that the "Bantuse holes" should be attributed to another people, possibly of the Cushite type.

/38 cont'd/

intermarriage by effeminate rape which has continued by peaceful penetration, raised a type of homosexual (some of the tribes we have with us today) inferior to Samoritan. There is very little in general principle common to them not even enough that the Dorobo, if it suppose them, can claim some small degree of ethnic identity in both.

Mr. D. L. S. Lesley told the Land Commission:-

"... there are Dorobo and Dorobo. There are Dorobo who are the ancient of the Dorobo and are a tribe quite distinct from anything I know in the country. They speak a language which I have completely failed to connect up with any of the languages spoken by the other tribes here. There are two or three families living on the Uasin Gishu today. Round that nucleus you have deserters from Nandi, Kikuyu, Nandi, Lumbwa, and all sorts of other people. You thus come across a mixed Dorobo people who have left their tribes and become Dorobo in the wide sense. Up behind Kipkabus there are innumerable families, half true Dorobo and half Kikuyu .... They call themselves Kikuyu, but live like Dorobo ..."

Mr. Worden's Kikuyu opinion among the older men is that the Dorobo, though legends suggest a remote relationship with the Kikuyu as well as others, were a separate tribe, speaking a language of their own, who subsequently became mixed up with other people who adopted their way of life. Some identify them with the Ki-Kumbo of the Masai, but the Dorobo of Kenya repudiate the and point out that there were no smiths among them and that they bought their spears and iron implements from the Masai and, later on, the Kikuyu. Mr. Jomo Kenyatta, however, regards the Dorobo as a Kikuyu-Gumbo blend. In Facing Mount Kenya he writes:

"... soon after the Gumbo had disappeared as a race, there came into being another race of hunters known as Ndorobo or Aatie, who seemed to have grown like mushrooms in the forests.

/58 cont'd/

Unlike their predecessors, they were not short in stature, but something between the Gumba and the Kikuyu. Also they did not live underground, but built their homes on the surface, almost on similar lines to those of the Gikuyu homesteads. Their language, too, was similar to the Gikuyu. To a certain extent the two tribes could understand one another with little difficulty. D 174 144

With these evidences it would not be assuming too much to say that the interbreeding between the Gumba and the Gikuyu was responsible for the disappearance of the Gumba as a distinct race, and the producing of the Ndorobo or Aathi, who became the new owners and the masters of the forests ..."

/59/ 66. With regard to language I have satisfied myself that the Dorobo now living at Keflita, who are the ones with whom we are particularly concerned, spoke a language of the Nandi type. Old men still speak it, though they also speak Kikuyu. The younger men use Kikuyu almost exclusively. In this Dorobo language, as still spoken by the older men, there has been considerable borrowing from Masai, though the bulk of the vocabulary is Nandi-like. But when both Masai and Nandi are excluded there remains perhaps an element which may be a residuum of pure original Dorobo, or may merely represent the degree of variation one would expect in any dialect isolated from the other dialects of its group for a lengthy period, as one must suppose this particular dialect of Nandi or pre-Nandi to have been. The old men say that the language they speak today is the only language spoken by their tribe in former times, so far as they know. They can manage to understand a Nandi or a Kipsigis, but do not find it easy. As far as I could make out in the time at my disposal the grammar of the language, like its vocabulary, is of a Nandi type. A few comparisons are given here to illustrate the vocabulary. Substantives are given in the form with the article and verbs are shown as stems only. N D 197 D [191] D [197] N D 192 197

/59 cont'd/

	Dorobo	Nandi	Masai
one	agenge	akenge	
two	oii	oieng'	
three	thumuk	somok	
four	ang'wan	ang'wan	ong'wan
five	mut	mut	(imyet)
six	kot	ilio	(ilie)
seven	nabishana		naapishana
eight	isiit	sisiit	isyet
nine	naudo		naudo
ten	taman	taman	tomon
twelve	taman ag oii	taman ak oieng'	
hundred	ib		ip
man	chiito, or ng'etat	chiito	
woman	chibagat		
women	oruuhik	koruiek	
warriors	murenik	murenik	il-muran
girls	tibik	tipik	
elder, old man	boiyondet	poiyot	
leopard	melildo	melildo (Kipsigis)	
lion	ngetundo	ng'etundo	
elephant	kiruubit		
forest pig	tumda	tumda	
goat	artet	artet	
ram	mingit	mengit	
heifer	iyuboget		
cow	tullondit	iyunget	
bullock	hito	eito	
rain	bwaget		
sun	athita	asista	
food	imdit	omdit	
hot	kot	kaita, kot	
tree	ketit	ketit	
war	luget	luket	

/59 cont'd/

	Dorobo	Nandi	Masai
witchdoctor	bonindet	ponindet	(ol-oibon)
Masai	iguobshondit	ipuapehot	
Kamba	ilong'u		'l-oo-ng'u (the stinkers)
Kikuyu	igue, kugwii		il-kokoyo
Dorobo	ogiek (pl.)	okiek (pl.)	
Swahili	Kong'aiek (pl.)		
European	ojuju (pl. ijuju)		'l-ojuju (the hairy ones)/60/
come	nyon	nyo	
go	ui	ui	
follow	nyur		
buy	ol	al (ol)	
eat	nuth		
want	moth	mach	
tie	rat	rat	

Complete accuracy is not claimed for this list of Dorobo words; accuracy is not easy when one is dealing with aged men with untrained minds: they are so apt to answer in long sentences which doubtless contain the words one wants but smothered under a mass of verbiage entirely unintelligible to one not previously acquainted with their language. But the list is sufficiently accurate to fulfil its purpose, which is to relate the speech of these Dorobo to some other dialect if such a relationship exists in fact.

67. And that, I think, is just about as far as we can go towards an ethnological synopsis of the Dorobo people in the present state of knowledge. It seems, then, likely that there was some section of a people who retained their hunting culture when the rest of them assumed a settled pastorality or agriculture. Just what these people were we cannot yet say. The scanty evidence we have points to their being something other than a Bantu-speaking tribe, and Nilo-Hamite of a Nandi type would seem to fit the facts as well as any. It would be unsafe to base our findings on their language, but if we permit ourselves to talk of Bantu immigrations from the east and Nilo-Hamite

/60 cont'd/

immigrations from the north, we may perhaps believe the Dorobo to be an early instance of the second rather than the first, a tribe that scattered widely over country sparsely occupied before the main invasions and confined itself to hunting on the plains and in the fringes of the forests, where they encountered pygmy peoples of an occupation very much like their own, but of a lower culture, peoples, scarcely tribes, who soon retreated more and more into the forest depths and left the plains, so plentiful in game, to their more vigorous, better organized successors. Thereafter, when the Bantu immigrations became effective, these hunters in their turn were forced into the forests or into more remote, more arid semi-deserts, unfitted for the closely-settled mode of life the Bantu hordes were ultimately certain to adopt. We may suppose that there was some absorption of the Bushman dwarfs whose means of sustenance were much the same as their own, and we may suppose the Bantu, in the early days, were also essentially hunters, but had learned to some extent the mysteries of agriculture on the coast or in the immediate hinterland in contact with the immigrants from western Asia (who no doubt had pressed them or their like into their service and had had to raise an annual food supply from fertile soil inside the coastal strip to keep a labour force alive to yield their incomes from plantations of perennials). So they depended less on unassisted Nature. Then came the main Nilotic and Hamitic[1] armies

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1. Cf. Johnston (op. cit.): "... it is evident that Equatorial Africa was at one time almost continuously Bantu in speech ... from the east coast of the Victoria Nyanza to the Indian Ocean; and that into this Bantu sphere there came, several centuries ago, hordes of invading Nilotic Masai, Dorobo, Nandi, and Ja-Luo. These invasions reduced the area of the Bantu languages in Equatorial East Africa to islands and peninsulas." In my conjectural account I have put the Dorobo influx as earlier not merely than the Nilo-Hamitic immigration but earlier than the most northerly Bantu immigration (from the east) as well. This seems to be essential to an explanation of the facts of distribution and possibly language.

/60 cont'd/
from the north and east which forced the Bantu /61/ immigrants in turn to settle down to a more intensive agricultural life in the higher, safer country, where by an exploitation of the forest soils a density of population hitherto unknown in Eastern Africa could be maintained by shifting cultivation. One can well imagine that this change in subsistence-culture was not an altogether welcome one to the Bantu tribes who had hitherto lived on game and other natural produce of the plains and occasionally reaped, perhaps, some short-term annual. Increasing population-density as well as virile enemies had forced a settled life of agricultural drudgery on the Bantu, especially on their women. Many, no doubt, would try to retain the freedom of the former life by wandering in the forests and any other kind of country still unoccupied, provided an adequate supply of game and water could be found there. So there would be some slight degree of inter-penetration and intermarriage, and the pre-Dorobo tribe would undergo some change from blood-infusions of a Bantu type. Others of the pre-Dorobo tribe would find themselves excluded from the lower forests by the increasing mass of Bantu immigrants and, to a large extent, excluded from the plains as well, by Hamite tribes with mobile armies well organized for war and rapine. These others would, no doubt, either be destroyed or move still further off or, if they stayed and managed to survive, be relegated to a state of semi-serfdom[1].

174

1. So one hears of Masai Dorobo, Kikuyu Dorobo, Lumbwa Dorobo, and so on. The "Dorobo Committee" remarked that the Sanye were actually slaves of the Galla and had for ages acted as their hunters and that those living in the Giriama Reserve had passed from the ownership of the Galla to that of the Giriama. But probably protection would be a better word than ownership, the relationship being a symbiotic one on ostensibly equal terms, for as the Committee remarked the Sanye supplied ivory and meat to the Giriama in exchange for beer, poison and maize. The position of all such Dorobo appears to be dependence on the protecting race for livelihood, whereas the protecting race merely depends to some extent on the Dorobo for luxuries and service. The institution of "Shegat" among Somalis and similar peoples seems to involve the same idea of interior status and dependence of the Shegat section, who none the less retain a theoretical freedom in the body politic.

648 439 [171]

/61 cont'd/

freemen in theory but only while the tolerance of the far more powerful tribes who were their neighbours could be gained by service and their power to appease - service as hunters and possibly as spies on other peoples, potentially the rivals of their hosts, and appeasement by their readiness to seek protection, to renounce their tribal pride and unity in favour of adoption[2] into other clans. They would become, if not the parasites on social orders different from their own, at best the junior partners in a symbiosis which, while to them it meant individual preservation at the risk of tribal death, would, to their seniors, mean no more than a corps of military intelligencers costing nothing.

And as to those electing to continue their former mode of life or to re turn to it, not among Africans alone are people[3] who find the "madding crowd" so irksome that they readily go back a stage or two in cultural trends in order to avoid it. To many a member of a "highly cultured" race a back-to-nature substitution of a complex, regimented, shoulder-rubbing life by pasturage or venery connotes no retrogression, but rather the reverse. For though the "noble savage" may have been discredited by later study, modern humankind, still ill-adapted to a repetition of itself in every acre, is prone to envy him.

/62/ 68. Dorobo and Meru

We must now see to what extent these Dorobo peoples - whatever they were - impinged on the tribes of the Land Unit when the latter entered the countries they now occupy. The Meru people

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2. In the case of the Dorobo from whom the Karura Kikuyu "bought" their lands, it seems that it was often the Dorobo who sought adoption. No doubt the Kikuyu in such a case would make the right to cultivate a condition of compliance. [648]

3. I have heard the Embu refer to professional big-game hunters as European Dorobo.

/62 cont'd/

told the 1929 Committee that they knew no aboriginals (Gumba), and said "There was no other tribe in the Forest when we came" and "We only know of Kikuyu, Wakamba, Masai, Samburu" by which they meant that these four tribes were the only African strangers they had encountered in their present territory. They had just previously told the Committee that they had fought the Mwoko for possession of the salt-licks and had driven out the Masai. 194

But when the Meru said "Samburu" they meant Dorobo, and there were in fact two Dorobo present at the baraza. They were probably of the Il Imwesi section, who were almost certainly the Dorobo mentioned by Neumann in his Elephant Hunting in East Equatorial Africa as living near Katheri (in Upper Abothuguchi). Neumann wrote:

> "The lower slopes were probably all forest once, but much has been cleared, and a large proportion of the land is cultivated by the natives, who are numerous here ... All these people are akin to those of Kikuyu, but there is a clan of WaKuavi (a branch of the Masai) living alongside of Katheri, and a community of Ndorobos too. Thus three distinct races, with different customs, live side by side."

69. It is not altogether certain, however, that the Kwavi were not Masai Dorobo rather than Masai. Most writers who mention them appear to have considered them a section of the Masai who had taken to agriculture, and Johnston in his Uganda Protectorate says:

> "These settlements of agricultural Masai in that direction (i.e. towards the Coast) were called by the Swahili traders 'Kwavi', name that no Masai can recognise or explain, but which has been perpetuated owing to its adoption by Krapf."

Bader, in a memorandum to the Land Commission, suggested that the word kwavi was a Swahili corruption of the Masai word kop or

/62 cont'd/
ngop, and Chief Ole Masikonde of the Purko Masai said that Loikop (meaning "wealthy cattle man") was still used by the Masai in a boastful sense. The Samburu call themselves Lokobb (a corruption of Loikop). Joseph Thomson in his Through Masailand tells how the agricultural Masai (the Kwavi), defeated by the pastoral Masai, fled in scattered bands to various places, including Laikipia and Uasin Gishu, only to be cut up and scattered again in later fighting. So that, if the Kwavi were originally Dorobo and not agricultural Masai, we have some confirmation of Mr. Cardale Luck's statement that the Uasin Gishu Masai were Dorobo in origin, and a quite good reason why the Meru should call the Dorobo by the name Samburu. Native opinion does not always, it would seem, identify Kwavi with Masai. Dundas' informants, detailing the origins of Chaga clans, apparently distinguished between the two, and the astonishing but matter-of-fact story of the Kwavi given by Mohamed bin Uweki Shoo to the Land Commission makes the relationship between the two that of blood-brotherhood, not common origin. 174

Krapf, in Travels and Missionary Labours in East Africa, writes consistently of the "Wakuafi and Masai tribes" as though he considered them distinct, though similar and apparently related, and in fact he refers to "The Wakuafi, brothers of the Masai".

70. Of the Il Imwesi, who were certainly in contact with the Meru until recent times, Mr. K.G. Lindsay wrote:

> /63/ "Originally hunters, they were for years in occupation of the forest area behind Katheri location in Mount Kenya. As the Meru acquired stock they were gradually driven out of the high ground, and migrated down to the plains at Lewa, where they grazed the stock which they themselves had acquired from early traders such as Gluxelic, a German ivory trader, whom they remember as Bwana Rupia, and Mr. Neumann. They gradually spread down to the Ngare Ndare, due to the alienation of land for white settlement, and were there twenty-five years ago when Mr. Horne first brought them under administration. Their language is Masai",[1]

/63 cont'd/

It would seem that the Il Imwesi, though known to European settlers as "Meru Dorobo", affected the Meru very little. They were squeezed out of Katheri by the Meru and then out of the Loldaigas and the Lewa area by Europeans. They were moved back to the Meru District about 1925 and out of it again some twelve years later. 194

71. Dorobo and Mwimbi

The Mwimbi told the 1929 Committee that the Dorobo used to come and go, and the implication was that there was little contact between the two tribes. It was, however, generally believed that their spokesman himself, Mbogore, had Dorobo blood in his veins. The Mwimbi failed to mention the Mwoko (Mukoko), who were possibly, according to Mr. Gurney's account, connected with them. They are noticed here because it does not seem too far-fetched to identify the "ancient Mukoko" of that account with the present Mukogodo of Nyeri District, and these Mukogodo claim, according to Mr. K.G. Lindsay's memorandum to the Land Commission, to be pure Dorobo, though the "Dorobo Committee" reported that they were said not to be Dorobo at all, but a separate tribe living on and around the Mukogodo hills and believed to have been there from time immemorial, and that there were two sections of them, a stock-owning section who lived on the plains, and a stockless section who lived on shelves in the hills. The former might well be of the type the Meru encountered on the Tigania plains and fill Mr. Lindsay's description of the Mukogodo as "probably of Galla origin", and the latter may be true Dorobo hunters and identifiable with the Mukoko of Mr. Gurney's account. If so, one must suppose that the Mukogodo afford another instance of a symbiosis between a pastoral Hamitic tribe and a forest-dwelling hunting Dorobo type. Mr. Huntingford[2] expresses doubts about the Mukogodo similar to those of the "Dorobo Committee" and remarks: 178 101

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1. Memorandum submitted to the Land Commission.

2. loc. cit.

/63 cont'd/

"There are nine groups of true Dorobo in Kenya Colony, and a tenth, called Il-Mukogodo, who do not appear to be true Dorobo."

648
101

That the Mwimbi had a good deal more intercourse with the Dorobo or the Mwolo or both than they are prepared to admit in open baraza seems to be indicated by the fact that the Meru proper associate the Mwimbi with the Dorobo and call the Il-Imwesi the Mwethi or the Mwimbi Dorobo, and say that the present Mukogodo, whom they sometimes call Mokuru, contain numbers of Mwimbi Dorobo and some Mwimbi who went off with them. A Mwimbi elder told me (not in open baraza) that not long ago there were Dorobo living close to the Mwimbi and trading skins with them for grain. Their leader was named Thiathui or Chachui and he went off somewhere to the north with most of his people.

[439]

/64/ 72. Dorobo and Chuka, etc.

There is very little evidence of any contact between the Dorobo and the Mutambi, Chuka, Embu or Mbere tribes. No doubt there had been such contact in the past, but possibly it was so long ago and so slight that any memory of it had faded before the European occupation. But that the minor tribes know of the Dorobo is evident from the fact that they distinguished them from the Gumba in answer to Major Orde Browne's enquiries. It may be that the east and south-east of the mountain had not been occupied by the Dorobo at all or, more probably, that there was so little distinction between the minor tribes and the Dorobo in general culture and appearance that the latter left a less lasting impression on the tribal memory than the very much more primitive and strikingly different Bushmen. None the less there is credible evidence (not advanced by the Embu) of a Dorobo settlement near Manyatta Camp in the Embu District about the beginning of the present century, and that there were Dorobo in Mwea, not far from the territories of the Embu, Mbere, Gichugu and Ndia, in the vicinity, in fact, of two of the most important sacred groves of the two former tribes, is suggested by

/64 cont'd/
a statement made by Kivoi and recorded by Krapf in his Travels and Missionary Labours in East Africa to the effect that he (Kivoi) was going to "Muea, in the Wandurobo country". 648 101

73. The Tharaka say that they used to see Dorobo in the old days, but they seem to have had little if any contact with them. They call them Antorobo, the singular of which is Ntorobo, or, using the common convention for the recording of Meru names, M'Robo, that is, Muntu wa Robo, "person of Robo".

74. Dorobo and Gaki Kikuyu

A note in the Nyeri Political Record, referring to January 1911, states:

> "The District is divided up into agricultural, pasture and forest land. The agricultural portion is densely populated with natives. The West Kenya farms comprise the greater part of the pasture land while the forests are at present the home of the Dorobo."

It was by the clearing of the forest that the Nyeri Kikuyu obtained their agricultural land and they must certainly have met the Dorobo in the process. This is borne out by another note of the same date in the same record: "The Kikuyu may not intermarry with the Dorobo". This injunction may have been operative at the time it was recorded but there seems to have been considerable intermarriage in earlier times. [582]

The Nyeri Kikuyu, however, told the 1929 Committee that the Dorobo were among the Masai, not among themselves. Yet there were men present at the baraza who knew perfectly well that the Dorobo had quite recently lived just north of them and had had considerable intercourse with them from time to time and that, in fact, there was quite a lot of Dorobo blood in their own veins. The evidence, native and non-native, given to the Land Commission makes this quite clear. Mr. K.G. Lindsay's memorandum refers to the Dorobo called Ndigiri, who, he says, claim to be of pure Dorobo descent and

/64 cont'd/

"to have occupied the land along both banks of the Ahoni[1] or Amboni River. They intermarried and traded in famine years with the Kikuyu, and cannot remember having come from any other part of the country. For the most part, they lived apart, hunting in the /65/ Loldaika Hills. Between 1905 and 1912, when the alienation of land to Europeans took place, they were pressed northwards to their hunting grounds, and eventually settled down with the Mukogodo, having acquired cattle from the Masai and early traders, such as Mr. John Boyes. They included the El Choki plains within their grazing area. Their language is similar to Masai."

648
101

Mr. John Boyes told the Commission of a meeting between himself, a Dorobo chief Olomondo, and the Kikuyu chief Wangombe, and Wangombe's son Ndirango, in a memorandum to the Commission, speaks of "Chief Olemondo of Dorobo of Donkeys". The Dorobo referred to are clearly the Ndigiri[1], that being the common Kikuyu word for 'donkeys'.

The "Dorobo Committee" classified the Loldigiri among the group living north of Laikipia and Mr. Huntingford puts the Digiri among the true Dorobo of his Eastern Group.

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1. The Gaki Kikuyu also call this river Honi. Ahoni in Kikuyu means "the Honi people", and honi may be related to an original Nyika stem foni (f bilabial) which, prefixed by n, would give mboni in Ndia and honi in Kikuyu. Some relationship between the Ndigiri and the Coast Boni might possibly be indicated.

1. Perhaps it was among the Dorobo that the Kikuyu first saw donkeys, which appear to have been unknown to the Bantu tribes of the Unit until comparatively recently. A Nyeri elder told me that the Ndigiri used donkeys instead of women for the transport of the meat of animals killed in the chase.

[492]
[231]

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The Ndigiri may have been on the eastern side of the mountain as well. An old man from Igoji told me that the Dorobo formerly thereabouts were known as the Ndigiri or Mokuru, and there is a place in Imenti called "Muromo-Ntigiri" - "Doorway of the Ndigiri" - said to be on the track by which the Ndigiri migrated northwards, though the name might possibly refer to nothing but a path once used for donkey transport. 101

It is possible, indeed, that the Ndigiri are (or were) very widespread in the eastern half of Kenya, for it seems unreasonably not to identify them with the Wadegere of the southern coast, of whom Captain C.T. Davenport, in a memorandum to the Land Commission, says:

> "The aboriginal inhabitants of the (Duruma) country were a tribe of hunters called Wadegere, who, but for two or three small settlements where their language is still spoken, are extinct, either through disease or through absorption by the surrounding tribes; probably the latter".

Possibly the Ndighiri "clan" of the Taveta are also Ndigiri Dorobo in origin.

75. Dorobo and Metume Kikuyu 101 648

The Fort Hall Kikuyu told the 1929 Committee:-

> "There were no Dorobo here" (i.e. when the Kikuyu arrived) "the nearest were on the Mau".

But Commander Lawford appears to have been informed a good many years before, when he was District Commissioner, Fort Hall, that "in years long past" the Kikuyu country, then being forest, was "in the tenure of Wanderobo"[2], and, earlier still, Mr. L. Talbot Smith, who was District Commissioner from 1908 to 1910, recorded in the Political Record that

2. Quoted by Beech, loc. cit.

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101
648

"The various members of the several tribes with the exception of the Anderobo appear to have been driven to what is now known as Kikuyu country by stress of famine and found it occupied by Anderobo. The Anderobo seem to have received these emigrants hospitably and to have sold them shambas which were originally demarcated by planting 'kihutia' shoots and which growing up formed permanent landmarks, the shambas to this day descending from father to son. In the course of time owing to the gradual spreading of the Kikuyu shambas the bulk of the Anderobo were driven from the country".

76. Dorobo and Karura Kikuyu

101
174

In regard to the territory south of the Chania River (the present Kiambu District) it may be said with confidence that the forest areas (much more extensive then than now) were in the occupation, probably somewhat sparse, of a Dorobo people at the time of the Kikuyu influx. The Kiambu Kikuyu told the 1929 Committee that:

"In the very first place the country about here was occupied by Wanderobo who were hunters ... There were Dorobo in this District as far as the Chania".

The Committee recorded the opinion that "the Kiambu District was certainly the last to be occupied and Dorobo were hunting over it."

Dr. L.S.B. Leakey, in his study of the Southern Kikuyu, has recorded a number of facts and opinions concerning the Dorobo with whom the Kikuyu came into contact. The following are extracts:

"There is no record that the Wanderobo hunting tribe were ever in effective occupation of that part of the country" i.e. the Fort Hall area, "and the only previous inhabitants seem to have been a tribe called by the Kikuyu Gumba, or Maitho a Ciana. These people, from all accounts, must have been a pygmy race, few in numbers, and having no organised land occupation even for hunting purposes.

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"South of the Chania river the position was very different, a few families of Gumba were living here and there in the forest - a fact which even the Wanderobo admit - but they were merely wanderers eking out a precarious existence and hiding from the real owners, the Wanderobo. 101 174

"The Wanderobo were, like the Gumba, a hunting people, but it would seem that they were much more organised and according to their own tradition they had even, in the dim past, definite laws or customs relating to hunting rights... [224]

"The Kikuyu described the Wanderobo as the Athi a Githaka or 'Rulers of the Bush land', and never spoke of them among themselves as the Nderubu, which was the name by which they were known to the Masai. 101

"The word Wanderobo has been used by Europeans in Kenya to describe the various hunting tribes that inhabit the forest zones of the Kenya Highlands, and there is no doubt at all that the name has been used to describe several distinct tribal entities which anthropologists and linguists would have no difficulty in distinguishing from each other on the grounds of law and custom and language. For the purpose of this study we must concern ourselves only with that tribe called Wanderobo by the Europeans, which inhabited the forest lands which later were bought by the Kikuyu, and the descendants of whom are still living in the forest on the boundary of Kikuyu country in the Kijabe region and northwards on to the slopes of the Aberdare mountains. Today only some two or three hundred individuals are left to represent the Wanderobo of this area, and most of them have a greater or less proportion of Kikuyu blood in their veins, but /67/ they still retain many customs which are quite different to those of the Kikuyu and they still speak among themselves a distinct language of their own, although most if not all of them also speak Kikuyu, but with a marked accent. [131] [131] [162] [144] [191]

/67 cont'd/

"In spite of the fact that only such a small number of Wanderobo are left to represent this tribe, it would be erroneous to consider that the tribe was never more numerous, and in fact, there were probably several hundreds of families representing more than a thousand people in the not very distant past. The reason for the decrease in their numbers is due, not to extinction, but to absorption, for when the Kikuyu bought their land many Wanderobo families gave up their hunting life and married into Kikuyu families as well as giving their daughters in marriage to the Kikuyu, until in the course of a generation or two they were completely absorbed ...

"... it was the custom of the Wanderobo of the Kikuyu area to live in fairly large villages where their numbers gave them and their families reasonable security from attack, and where they could organise their social life in such a way as to have courts of justice and other amenities of this type".

77. Dorobo Organization

With regard to organization, a Dorobo witness told the Land Commission in a sworn statement: "Like the Kikuyu we had our mbaris", but this does not in itself mean very much; an mbari is only an extended family and the extension may be so slight that all we can infer from the remark, if we believe it, is that the family was the unit of the social order. But the same witness, later on in the same statement, said: "Our name 'Mbari ya Choiro' is the name applied to us all, as Kikuyu is the name for all the Kikuyu tribe. Within the Mbari ya Choiro there are other mbari", and this certainly suggests a recognition of the mbari as part of a clan, though the possibility of mere imitation cannot be ruled out.

The following brief account of their tribal organization was given me at a meeting of the Dorobo now living at Kerita on the edge of the Forest Reserve, and subsequently checked with the assistance of two elders, Ruchuba obo Lesuswa, who lives on a European farm close to the Forest Reserve (in the Naivasha area), and Gwamba ng'ab Sabaiya, who lives at Kerrita.

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The people call themselves Ogiek. The Keriita section has nine clans, as follows: Kapkibotome, Kamwibu, Kapgwathiru, Kapieldegwa, Kabumbuit, Kapchoiro, Kamuri, Kabiaiya, and Kaplogwe. These are said to be exogamous. The prefix kap suggests that they were at one time territorial. The Kikuyu mbari ya is sometimes heard in place of this prefix, thus mbari ya Kibotome, mbari ya Mwibu, etc. There are said to be other clans which are not represented at Keriita. 614 [582]

If one asks an old man what his clan is he will very likely name one of the following instead of one of those given above: Il-mogethenithiek, Ilugumonithiek, Il-mulelionithiek, Iraitheriek, Il-bargenetithiek, Il-taretheru, Il-kiboronithiek, Il-aitaiyuk, and Il-giringishu. It will be noticed that most of these have both the Masai and the Nandi (Dorobo) articles. The first eight correspond to the Masai clans or sub-clans Il-Mokesen, Il-Lughumae, Il-Molelyan, 'L-Aiser, Il-Parkeneti, Il-Tarosero, Il-Kiporon and 'L-Aitayok respectively, and the ninth is clearly a Masai name. Sometimes a more Bantu-sounding variation is heard, Mugethe instead of Il-mogethenithiek and Ndaruthiru instead of Il-taretheru for instance.

/68/ Occasionally an old man will name one of the nine Kikuyu major clans as his clan, and I was told that there is a correspondence between the nine Kikuyu major clans, the nine named Masai clans, and the nine Dorobo clans, but lists of such alleged correspondences vary with the informant and no informant that I discovered could give a complete list. This is not surprising, for the Masai correspondences are said to be based on friendship and the Kikuyu correspondences on blood-brotherhood, both of which probably affected individual families rather than whole clans.

The word used for "clan" is olgelatait (pl. ilgelataithiek), which has both the Masai and Nandi (Dorobo) articles. The former is frequently omitted. This word may be the same as the Masai ol-ng'elata, which Hollis translates as "the plain between two hills". This again suggests clan-territoriality, as the word may have been used by the Dorobo to mean a stretch of country inside natural boundaries, e.g. rivers.

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Succession is patrilineal and marriage patrilocal. Polygyny is practised. The lineage is a functional continuum, including ancestral spirits as active members while they are still remembered by the persons responsible (so to speak) for keeping them alive by acts of memory and communion, the continuum being of the perpetually successive rather than of the periodically recurrent type, that is to say, a boy is his father's second self rather than his grandfather or great-grandfather born again.

Initiation includes a circumcision rite for boys and a pre-marital rite of clitoridectomy for girls. Age-grading is based on male initiation. There are no generation-ages except in so far as the Dorobo imitated or joined in the ituika of the Kikuyu and the eunoto of the Masai. The word they use for the handing-over ceremony is cunotwet. Alternating ages or generations are distinguished as onet ap-tai (the right hand) and onet ap-katap (the left hand). When the Kikuyu system is referred to Mwangi is the former and Maina the latter, but the expressions were probably used originally of the Masai right-hand and left-hand circumcision groups.

There are no indigenous chiefs, the judiciary and legislature being a council of elders. Such an elder is called kiruogindet (pl. kiruogik). A kiruogindet has much the same function as a Kikuyu muthamaki. There is no laibon but formerly the Dorobo owed allegiance to the laibon of the Masai.

They recognize one Supreme Being, called Tururit (compare the Suk Tororut). There appears to be no cult of so-called Sun Worship. The sacred trees, used for prayers to Tururit, are, for rain the bamboo (a solitary clump), for honey the mukeu, and, in connection with circumcision ceremonies, the muthai and the mutamaiyu.

78. Little or nothing is known of the relationship of the Dorobo of Southern Kikuyu with other Dorobo sections. The "Dorobo Committee" called them the Kikuyu Escarpment group, and remarked that they were first found in the Aberdares but left there and went to the Masai Reserve, whence they were ejected. At the time the Committee sat this group was living as forest squatters in the

/88 cont'd/
Aberdares and at Kijabe. In Mr. Huntingford's classification they are presumably included in the Masai group, called Kidong, or in the Kikuyu group, called Digiri. 191 194 101 648

79. It is probable that the Dorobo who lived well inside the forests south of the Chania were entirely independent of any other tribe until the Kikuyu arrived and occupied their country and gradually turned them into the half-absorbed, half-expelled people now known as the Kikuyu Dorobo, but that those living in the fringes of the forest and carrying their hunting expeditions into the plains were already under the influence -- almost under the aegis, if not the suzerainty -- of the Masai. We find them referred to occasionally as the Kaputiei Dorobo and it is not altogether too much of a strain on the imagination to suppose that the /88/ relationship was really not so much one of symbiosis or semi-dependence as one of common origin but different culture, the Dorobo and the Kaputiei representing respectively the section of a tribe which had preferred to remain in its original state of untrammelled freedom and the section of the same tribe which had assumed a pastoral life and had had a Masai militarism thrust upon it, and had as well perhaps absorbed a modicum of the Masai blood. Such a flight of the imagination would merely bring us nearer to Mr. Cardale Lock's hypothesis that the "Kabti" Masai were originally Dorobo, and possibly serve to explain the Kikuyu name of "Andu a Kabeta" for the most southerly section of themselves, of whom he says, "There is a third group generally called the Kabete Kikuyu ... who have intermarried with Masai, mainly Kabte, and with their Dorobo". The word Kabte (or Kapte) certainly has more of a Nandi (and consequently, perhaps, Dorobo) than Masai flavour, and it is among the Southern Kikuyu that the two guilds, to which Hobley called attention and which he named the Kikuyu and the Masai, with differing customs in certain aspects of the social life, such as initiation, are particularly intermixed. The Kikuyu call the latter the Ukabi guild, wherein we see perhaps a recurrence of the same stem kap, though the word ukabi has generally been related to the Swahili ukwasi, derived by Roder from the Masai stem ngap. The Rev. Canon Leakey, in a memorandum to the Land Commission, said: 194 101

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774
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"... the late Rev. W.A. McGregor ... had been living ... latterly on the Church Missionary Society Station which he founded and called Kiburuburini, and which later I renamed Kabete, reintroducing an old but almost lost Kikuyu name".

which suggests that the alternative to "Andu a Karura" was based on an old tribal or sub-tribal name rather than on the name of some physiographical feature[1]. On these grounds it might be argued that though the predominating factor in the ethnological make-up of the southernmost Kikuyu is an influx of Kikuyu proper from Metume the people recognize (or used to recognize) a very considerable element of Kaputiei (Kabete, perhaps the same as Kwavi) blood, which may itself have had its origin in a Dorobo tribe[2]. The similarity of the word Kabete to the names of Dorobo clans may be significant.

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1. The actual place originally called Kabete is an open piece of ground in the vicinity, where water stands after the rains.

2. The following is an extract from Chief Koinange's evidence before the Land Commission: "... most of the Kaputiei warriors were killed. Those who remained came to the Kikuyu and asked that they should be allowed to live amongst them at Kamiti. Their guide was Thianga and he was a Kikuyu originally, and another man also called Ndegwa wa Kamiti, stepbrother of Thianga. The chief of these Kaputei Masai is also a Kikuyu, because he was born in the Kikuyu Reserve. Their clan is called "Kaimi", i.e. L'Aimer "by the Masai, and we call this clan Anjiru". This last sentence suggests a recognition of a relationship, but whether of blood or blood-brotherhood is not clear; probably the latter, though the whole passage infers a mixture of blood. In a memorandum to the Commission Chief Koinange remarks: "The Kikuyu took them over and made some ceremonies for internationality ... They are now known as Kaputie Masai, who are regarded as Kikuyu Masai (Kabutii)".
In Facing Mount Kenya, Mr. Jomo Kenyatta talks of "... this friendly relationship ... particularly between the Kaptei Masai and the Southern Gikuyu ..."

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80. Within historic times we find the tribes of the Unit impinged upon by Dorobo people only where comparatively recent movements have brought the two together. Elsewhere the Dorobo people had either been expelled or else absorbed or both. The circumferential movement of the Meru brought them into touch with the Il Imweri, the northerly extension of the Gaki Kikuyu with the Ndigiri, and the southerly invasion of Kikuyu from Metume into Karura with the Kabte (or whatever they should be called). In the last two cases there was, at the time of the British occupation, a relationship between the impinging tribes involving expulsion of the die-hards (not by war but by continued pressure), symbiosis in greater or less degree, and absorption still in progress but so far incomplete.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER IV

(a) Apart from the Njuwe, the Mwoko, and the Masai, who were all cattle-keepers on the plains, the names of peoples believed to have been in previous occupation of the Land Unit are Gumba, Athi and Dorobo.

(b) The Gumba were a Bushman or Pygmy tribe, probably the latter.

(c) The word Athi probably denotes a culture rather than a separate people.

(d) The Dorobo possibly represent an early Nilo-Hamitic invasion of a Nandi type.